



Integrated Country Strategy

Lithuania

For Public Release

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1. (U) Chief of Mission Priorities

(U) Lithuania is one of the United States' strongest friends and allies. We enjoy close, cooperative, and mutually beneficial relations rooted in historical connections, shared values, and common interests. Today Lithuania is a full member of NATO and the EU. Lithuania spends 2 percent of its GDP on defense and is investing hundreds of millions of dollars in U.S. defense equipment to modernize its military. In 2018, Lithuania joined the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development following the enactment of comprehensive reforms to fight corruption and enhance transparency. It also significantly improved the business climate, directly benefiting American businesses and exports to Lithuania. We will continue to support Lithuania in its efforts to strengthen its economic and political resilience to Russian malign influence, focusing on further developing areas where Lithuania already has taken or shown the potential to take a leadership role. We also will work with Lithuania to help the country recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, we will encourage Lithuania to continue to be an active proponent for our common priorities in Europe and throughout the world as we work to anchor the Western alliance. In order to fulfill the goals outlined in this strategy, we will seek additional positions in the Political/Economic, Public Affairs, and Management sections.

(U) Our first goal is that Lithuania remains a strong Transatlantic partner within NATO and in support of our broader efforts to enhance security and stability in Europe.

(U) Lithuania is an important advocate for increased defense spending and burden sharing within NATO, and for support for Ukraine, sanctions, and opposition to Russian malign influence within the EU and other multilateral institutions. Lithuania is like-minded on the need to increase deterrence and mobility within the NATO alliance, which will ensure we are strong, ready, and united against those who choose to be our adversaries. We will continue to augment Lithuania's defense modernization and sustain improvements through assistance and other programs that enhance self-defense capabilities, the ability to receive and support U.S. forces, and strengthen critical military and transportation infrastructure. We will seek to maintain this momentum as the COVID-19 crisis recedes. In addition, we will engage Lithuania to continue to advocate with key NATO allies on U.S. goals for burden sharing, readiness, and deterrence, while monitoring Lithuania's own progress toward its ambitious goal of increasing defense spending to 2.5 percent of GDP by 2030.

(U) As hybrid and cyber security threats on NATO's eastern flank grow, we will continue to work with Lithuania to secure its borders, protect critical private and government networks, counter transnational threats, ensure continuity of government operations, and enhance regional cooperation in these areas. When malign actors attempt to undermine our institutions, we will cooperate with Lithuanian institutions to counter these actions through coordinated sanctions, and through bilateral and regional diplomacy. We will also support Lithuania's efforts to lead cooperation in these areas at NATO and within the EU.

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(U) As we fight terrorism together and work to strengthen Europe's southern flank, our Mission will continue to engage Lithuania's support in global efforts such as the Resolute Support Mission in Afghanistan, the Defeat-ISIS Coalition, and other global security efforts. At the same time, we will encourage Lithuania to continue to expand its procurement of U.S. defense articles, currently valued at \$280 million, to improve interoperability with U.S. forces and strengthen Lithuania's commitments to NATO. We will continue to support Lithuania's purchases of U.S. defense articles and services, including the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle and the UH-60M Utility Helicopter. We also recognize Lithuania's support for eastern partners, in particular Ukraine and Georgia, and look to advance and complement Lithuanian efforts. Additionally, we will work to further strengthen the leadership role Lithuania has taken on important initiatives to prevent nuclear terrorism and detect and combat cyber security threats. We also will assist Lithuania to regionalize the work of the Nuclear Security Center of Excellence (NSCOE), and to enforce strategic trade controls.

(U) Our second goal is to advance an open, resilient, and sustainable Lithuanian economy that supports U.S. investment and balanced bilateral trade, and protects Lithuania's critical infrastructure and energy security.

(U) As Lithuania diversifies its energy sources, we will seek opportunities to increase the delivery of LNG, services, and equipment from the United States. We also are working bilaterally and regionally to advance U.S. goals for European energy independence by solidifying Lithuania's integration into the EU energy market. This will include support for regional gas projects such as the Gas Interconnector Poland-Lithuania (GIPL) and the synchronization of the Baltic electricity grid with continental European infrastructure. We will continue to coordinate with Lithuania in opposing politically driven energy projects in the region that undermine the safety and operational independence of our allies.

(U) To support bilateral economic cooperation, we will focus our efforts on sectors of growth that draw on U.S. expertise and promote U.S. exports. As Lithuania plans large national infrastructure improvements, we will encourage an approach that reinforces fair rules and access for U.S. companies, while countering Chinese influence that weakens transparency. Lithuania's increasing expertise in technology-driven fields provides opportunities for U.S. companies and partnerships with the Lithuanian government, the private sector, and civil society. We will engage more in these areas and promote the U.S. brand of entrepreneurship and innovation. We will continue our efforts in trade promotion, supporting U.S. companies that do business in Lithuania and encouraging Lithuanian investment in the United States. We also will seek to assist with Lithuania's economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

(U) Our third goal reinforces our shared commitment to democratic principles and values that bind us in the Transatlantic alliance.

(U) We will assist both government and non-governmental partners in combating corruption, countering disinformation, and strengthening governance to reinforce Lithuania's democratic institutions and political resilience. We will also use shared cultural connections to advance U.S. interests and to strengthen a civil society committed to universal human rights and Western principles. As part of these efforts, we are supporting Lithuanian advocates for tolerance and the inclusion of ethnic and social minorities, in order to eliminate fault lines that could be exacerbated by disinformation and malign actors. These actions will continue to demonstrate that our alliance is built on the principles of democracy, individual liberty, and the rule of law. We will identify prime candidates for the International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) and other professional exchange programs who can multiply our messages about U.S. commitment to these issues.

(U) As Lithuania has become a prominent international voice in supporting democracy and human rights, we will work together to ensure the promotion of our shared values as the foundation of our security and prosperity. This cooperation includes providing Russian and Belarusian defenders of democracy and human rights with the ability to operate in the face of danger and adversity at home, as well as calling violators to account.

2. (U) Mission Strategic Framework

(U) Mission Goal 1: Lithuania advances NATO priorities and Transatlantic cooperation to strengthen the Western alliance and enhance security and stability in NATO's eastern flank.

(U) Mission Objective 1.1: Lithuania continues defense investments in modernization, self-defense capabilities, infrastructure, mobility, and the means to combat hybrid threats; sustainment activities to support deterrence and enhance support for U.S. and multinational forces; and advocacy for burden sharing among western allies to fulfill international responsibilities in addressing global security challenges.

(U) Mission Objective 1.2: Lithuania increases its capacity to mitigate cyber threats and mentor others in this area, remains a reliable U.S. ally in international fora and takes on greater responsibility in countering malign cyber activity.

(U) Mission Objective 1.3: Lithuania effectively coordinates with the United States and other partners on border protection measures and legitimate travel procedures to include information sharing, hardware and software upgrades, and policy changes, while improving its capabilities to counter transnational threats and nuclear proliferation, both

nationally and through bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives.

(U) Mission Objective 1.4: The Mission protects and supports the welfare and interests of U.S. citizens living in or visiting Lithuania, provides specialized services such as hospital and prison visits, and collaborates closely with the U.S. community and U.S. companies in Lithuania to advance shared interests.

(U) Mission Goal 2: Lithuania advances an open, resilient, and sustainable economy that supports U.S. investment and balanced bilateral trade, and protects Lithuania's critical infrastructure and energy security.

(U) Mission Objective 2.1: Lithuania protects the integrity of critical infrastructure and promotes regional energy security and diversification of supply.

(U) Mission Objective 2.2: Lithuania supports policies that encourage high quality foreign investment, promotes strong bilateral trade, and adhere to international economic governance standards that will contribute to shared prosperity.

(U) Mission Objective 2.3: Lithuania pursues sound policies to support innovation, scientific research, and inclusive, sustainable development, as well as to recover economically from the COVID-19 pandemic.

(U) Mission Goal 3: Lithuania remains committed to democratic principles and the Transatlantic alliance.

(U) Mission Objective 3.1: Lithuania is a global leader in countering and building societal resilience to anti-Western disinformation and malign influence and shares its expertise with partners and allies.

(U) Mission Objective 3.2: Lithuanian government and civil society strengthens its support for human rights and the rule of law, while increasing tolerance for religious and ethnic minorities.

(U) Mission Objective 3.3: Lithuania is an active supporter of democratic reforms in Europe and globally, and increases its participation in international programs for transitioning nations.

- (U) Management Objective 4.1:** The Embassy makes significant progress in addressing inadequate wages and benefits for LE Staff, enabling us to better recruit and retain qualified personnel.
- (U) Management Objective 4.2:** The Embassy addresses critical life, safety, and security issues and makes practical improvements to facilities, helping to provide a safe, secure, and effective platform to conduct diplomacy.
- (U) Management Objective 4.3:** The Embassy adds essential staff in order to respond to the increased operational requirements of a new geopolitical environment, thus advancing our ability to achieve Mission goals.

3. (U) Mission Goals and Objectives

(U) Mission Goal 1: Lithuania advances NATO priorities and Transatlantic cooperation to strengthen the Western alliance and enhance security and stability in NATO's eastern flank.

(U) Description and Linkages: At the July 2016 Warsaw summit, NATO renewed its focus on collective defense and broadened deterrence beyond the traditional conventional/missile defense/nuclear triad, to include measures to deter cyber, hybrid, and other new threats. Implementation of this concept relies on allies meeting the Pledge on Defense Investment agreed at the 2014 Wales Summit – to spend 2 percent of GDP on defense and to invest 20 percent of defense spending on equipment within the next decade – and to fulfill their own defense and civil preparedness responsibilities. The objectives under Mission Goal 1 are aimed at advancing Lithuania's progress towards meeting NATO priorities both domestically and internationally. At home, Lithuania needs to continue to enhance its military capabilities, improve military mobility, sustain its commitment to NATO spending targets, and make effective defense expenditure decisions. Because it shares borders with both Russia and Belarus – making up about 10 percent of the European Union's external land border – developing Lithuania's domain awareness and border defense capabilities will positively impact the credibility of NATO deterrence and enhance U.S. security. Helping Lithuania to improve its resilience vis-à-vis hybrid and cybersecurity threats and to contribute to regionalization of defensive measures in these areas, are critical to meeting NATO goals. Lithuania also will be under pressure to decrease defense and security funding in order to counter the effects of the COVID-19 crisis; we need to help Lithuania recover economically while urging the country's leaders to continue to meet with defense and security commitments.

(U) Internationally, Lithuania plays an important role through its contributions to U.S., NATO and international peacekeeping operations, including in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as to the Defeat-ISIS Coalition and the International Maritime Security Construct. Embassy Vilnius will continue to work to facilitate Lithuanian participation in these operations.

Within NATO, the EU, and other multilateral institutions, Lithuania advocates for burden sharing within NATO, support for Ukraine, sanctions, and opposition to Russian malign influence, which align with U.S. positions. As international terrorist and criminal groups continue to seek the materials to conduct nuclear terrorism, Lithuania's role in promoting nuclear security—both in the region and internationally—should be enhanced.

(U) Linkages: US. Department of State-USAID FY 2018-2022 Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) Objective 3.2 emphasizes equitable burden sharing. In addition to meeting this goal at home, Lithuania helps the U.S. to persuade other states to expend their fair share. JSP Objective 1.4 is to increase capacity and strengthen resilience of our partners and allies to deter aggression, coercion, and malign influence by state and non-state actors. These aims are incorporated in the 2018-22 EUR Joint Regional Strategy (JRS) Framework goals to increase Western allies' capabilities through heightened defense spending and burden sharing, and to increase allies' responsibility for shared security threats. Mission Goal 1 is also directly linked to JRS objectives to strengthen deterrence to conventional, nuclear, hybrid and cyber threats, and the JRS aim to ensure the lasting defeat of ISIS and other transnational terrorist organizations. The latter is also reflected in the National Security Strategy 2017 objectives of pursuing threats to their source (including ISIS, other transnational terrorist organizations, as well as state-sponsored, regional and local terrorist groups) and to keep America safe in the cyber era.

(U) Mission Objective 1.1: Lithuania continues defense investments in modernization, self-defense capabilities, infrastructure, mobility, and the means to combat hybrid threats; sustainment activities to support deterrence and enhance support for U.S. and multinational forces; and advocacy for increased defense spending and burden sharing among western allies to fulfill international responsibilities in addressing global security challenges.

(U) Justification: Continued Lithuanian investment in defense is critical to better provide for its own security and contribute to a broad range of NATO objectives aimed at strengthening collective defense (Articles 3 and 5) by providing capabilities designed to counter twenty-first century threats. Lithuania's strong support for burden sharing in multilateral fora helps to bolster the U.S. message and increase the likelihood that other Allies will increase their defense expenditures, meeting the burden sharing goals encapsulated in the JSP.

(U) Mission Objective 1.2: Lithuania increases its capacity to mitigate cyber threats, mentors others in this area, remains a reliable U.S. ally in international fora, and takes on greater responsibility in countering malign cyber activity.

(U) Justification: Lithuania has identified cyber security as a national priority as the volume and sophistication of cyber-attacks targeting Lithuania increases every year. As a result, Lithuania's expertise and innovative cutting-edge operations are a model for others.

(U) Mission Objective 1.3: Lithuania effectively coordinates with the United States and other partners on border protection measures and legitimate travel procedures to include information sharing, hardware and software upgrades, and policy changes, while improving its capabilities to counter transnational threats, such as terrorism and nuclear proliferation, both nationally and through bilateral and regional cooperation initiatives.

(U) Justification: Lithuania's location on NATO's eastern flank means that its borders are the first line of defense against actors seeking to do harm to Lithuania and its NATO allies, including the United States. Lithuania's borders with Russia and Belarus make up about 10 percent of the European Union's external land border, giving Lithuania an outsized role in preventing illegal border crossings, ensuring border domain awareness, and combating smuggling – including of nuclear and radiological materials and controlled dual use items. Embracing this concern, Lithuania established the Nuclear Security Center of Excellence (NSCOE) and is seeking to regionalize the Center in order to spread best practices throughout the region. Lithuania is also an outspoken advocate for improving border domain awareness, both nationally and in the region. Helping Lithuania to develop these capabilities further and to ensure legitimate travel procedures will augment U.S. and NATO security.

(U) Mission Objective 1.4: The Mission protects and supports the welfare and interests of U.S. citizens living in or visiting Lithuania, provides specialized services such as hospital and prison visits, and collaborates closely with the U.S. community and U.S. companies in Lithuania to advance shared interests.

(U) Justification: There is a growing U.S. citizen population in Lithuania, which has increased the need for customer services. U.S. citizens in Lithuania face a unique challenge in that the country does not recognize dual citizenship. This has influenced how this group interacts with the U.S. Embassy. In addition, providing timely U.S. citizen services is more challenging following the elimination of the second officer position in the Consular Section in 2018. Providing first rate consular services to U.S. citizens overseas is a priority for the Department of State, as reflected in State/USAID Joint Strategic Plan Objective 1.5, "Strengthen U.S. border security and protect U.S. citizens abroad."

(U) Mission Goal 2: Lithuania advances an open, resilient, and sustainable Lithuanian economy that supports U.S. investment and balanced bilateral trade, and protects Lithuania's critical infrastructure and energy security.

(U) Description and Linkages: Having a stable, growing economy makes Lithuania a stronger economic partner for the United States, enabling us to build healthy trade relations and increase U.S. exports, and establish scientific and technical partnerships that can serve companies, universities, and start-ups in both countries. It also enables Lithuania to meet its NATO burden sharing and other security commitments and continue to modernize its armed forces. As Lithuania diversifies its energy sources, export opportunities for U.S. liquefied natural gas (LNG), renewable energy technology, as well as engineering and construction contractors, increase.

(U) This goal links to NSC goals of promoting free, fair, and reciprocal economic relationships; leading in research, technology, invention, and innovation; and, embracing energy leadership. Similarly, this supports the JSP goals of advancing U.S. economic security by ensuring energy security, combating corruption, and promoting market-oriented economic governance reforms, as well as advancing bilateral relationships to secure commercial opportunities and fostering investment and innovation to contribute to U.S. job creation.

(U) Mission Objective 2.1: Lithuania protects the integrity of critical infrastructure and promotes regional energy security and diversification of supply.

(U) Justification: Protection of critical infrastructure is a key objective for Lithuania as the country undertakes projects such as a port expansion, rail and road upgrades, 5G telecommunications networks, and investments in energy infrastructure. Lithuania is also reviewing its investment screening legislation considering increased demand on the system, newly emerging threats, and the adoption of EU-level investment screening policies.

(U) On energy, Lithuania has made great strides in achieving energy security, and continues to work toward that goal. Energy security serves to support health, safety, the economy, and national security. U.S. exports of liquefied natural gas, renewable energy technology such as wind turbines, biofuel, and solar cells, and technical expertise in electrical grid and gas network security will all contribute to enhancing Lithuania's energy security and help it become a stronger bilateral partner. Their role will be increasingly important in helping Lithuania recover from the effects of the COVID-19 crisis. Since Lithuania currently imports over 70 percent of its electric power, synchronizing with the continental European grid will create more diversity and security of supply that will not only bring economic stability to Lithuania, but will also provide a

stable power source for NATO troops in the region. Additionally, developing more renewable sources such as wind, solar, and biofuel, will contribute to the stability of power supply, especially in rural areas. Finally, strengthening Lithuania's gas infrastructure through pipeline connections to the EU and the commercial viability of the Floating Storage and Regasification Unit (FSRU) in Klaipeda will help guarantee a diversity of supply and keep natural gas prices in line with global market standards.

(U) Mission Objective 2.2: Lithuania supports policies that attract high quality U.S. and foreign investment, promote strong bilateral trade, and adhere to international economic governance standards that will contribute to shared prosperity.

(U) Justification: Continuing a strong economic relationship between the United States and Lithuania contributes to our political and strategic relationship. A strong Lithuanian economy also supports Lithuania's resilience and enables its continued commitment to NATO burden sharing and our security goals. The United States is Lithuania's 5th largest trading partner and 16th largest investor. These increasing business ties contribute to the positive impression Lithuanians have of the United States and set a high standard for corporate conduct in the region. Additionally, despite Lithuania's small consumer market, it provides an affordable, stable option for companies wishing to get a foothold in the European market.

(U) Mission Objective 2.3: Lithuania pursues sound policies to support innovation, scientific research, and inclusive, sustainable development, as well as to recover economically from the COVID-19 pandemic.

(U) Justification: Lithuania has become a hub for high-tech sectors such as life sciences and laser innovation and research. This has attracted investors creating high value-added jobs. This has also cultivated a vibrant start-up culture, creating many new potential partners for U.S. companies and research institutions. This bilateral synergy has already led to collaboration in the areas of cellular research, CRISPR genetic technologies, and devices to better diagnose brain pressure that can lead to traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which will have global applications. Establishing an entrepreneurship-friendly economy, including in rural, less economically developed, and minority communities most susceptible to Russian malign influence, will also contribute to economic stability and create more opportunities for U.S. companies to do business in Lithuania. Lithuania's increased role in implementing the EU's Green Deal and growing awareness of local environmental issues will also present opportunities for U.S. investment and engagement. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to produce a severe economic contraction, and Lithuania's recovery will depend on steady growth in the economic drivers of the above areas.

(U) Mission Goal 3: Lithuania remains committed to democratic principles and the Transatlantic alliance.

(U) Description and Linkages: Lithuania is proud of its membership in NATO and the EU, and is a bulwark and proponent of Western, democratic ideals in the region. Lithuania is also among the most outspoken advocates in Europe for a stronger Transatlantic relationship. As it bolsters its rule of law and civil society, Lithuania is becoming an increasingly capable partner for the United States, with ample opportunities for cooperation both domestically and internationally. Additionally, Lithuania has been at the forefront of the movement to analyze and address the threat of Russian disinformation and malign influence designed to undermine the Lithuanian government, relations with the U.S. and NATO, and Western democratic values. Lithuania has the potential to be a global leader in this area. At the same time, while Lithuania has taken significant steps to counter disinformation and maintains a strong societal consensus in favor of democratic values and Transatlantic institutions, outside efforts to exert a malign influence on certain populations continue. A 2019 public opinion survey showed that while the majority of Lithuanians report favorable attitudes toward Western principles and institutions, there are pockets of the population, particularly in less economically developed and minority areas, that are vulnerable to persistent anti-Western narratives. The economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly if amplified by Russian disinformation, may also increase these vulnerabilities.

(U) Mission Goal 3 supports the 2018-22 State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) strategic objective 3.1 to transition nations to enduring diplomatic, economic, and security partners; and strategic objective 3.3 to increase partnerships with the private sector and civil-society

organizations to mobilize support and resources and shape foreign public opinion. Additionally, this goal links with JSP goal 1.4 to increase the capacity and strengthen resilience of our partners and allies to deter aggression, coercion, and malign influence by state and non-state actors. It also supports the European Joint Regional Plan (JRP) priorities to deepen collaboration with European allies to confront forces undermining our common values; counter Russian subversion and aggression; and, advance shared principles and interests.

(U) Mission Objective 3.1: Lithuania is a global leader in countering and building societal resilience to anti-Western disinformation and malign influence and shares its expertise with partners and allies.

(U) Justification: Lithuania has risen to the challenge of being a constant target of disinformation by pro-Kremlin media outlets. Citizens maintain trust in most government institutions, and public support for the United States and Lithuania's membership in NATO and the European Union remains high. With U.S. support, Lithuanian can take on a greater global leadership role in exporting its counter-disinformation skill set.

(U) Mission Objective 3.2: The Lithuanian government and civil society strengthens its support for human rights and the rule of law, while increasing tolerance for religious and ethnic minorities.

(U) Justification: As Kremlin media strive to frame the U.S. relationship with Lithuania as one based solely on security and economic ties, or try to amplify differing opinions on social questions and policies, partnerships on issues of human rights and tolerance strengthen the positive narrative that Western principles are also a basis of the Transatlantic relationship. Lithuania has a civil society sector committed to addressing social problems such as social welfare, corruption, child welfare, trafficking in persons, historical memory, disability and LGBTI rights, and the integration of minorities. While NGOs continue to proliferate and gain greater expertise in human rights areas such as advancing Women, Peace and Security objectives, civil society leaders still complain about lack of both government support and a spirit of volunteerism. The Lithuanian government has taken some steps to ameliorate social and human rights conditions by developing comprehensive plans to reduce corruption, protect children and the vulnerable, deinstitutionalize orphanages and disability institutions, and fight human trafficking, but concrete reforms are slow to realize, in particular with respect to LGBTI rights. As Lithuania's civil society continues to develop, it benefits significantly from increased international experience and networks. Public awareness of U.S. support to Lithuanian society also increases popular support for the Transatlantic relationship and creates lasting people-to-people ties.

(U) Mission Objective 3.3: Lithuania is an active supporter of democratic reforms in Europe and globally, and increases its participation in international programs for transitioning nations.

(U) Justification: At the crossroads of east and west, Lithuania is a powerful role model for other former Soviet republics. It is uniquely positioned to take a leadership role in a number of regional and international challenges. The EU's Eastern Partnership (EaP) remains a signature Lithuanian foreign policy priority. While Lithuania devotes most attention to regional issues, it has shown increasing willingness to partner with the United States further afield, including building the capacity of EaP countries to counter disinformation and malign influence. Maintaining Lithuanian engagement on these issues and cultivating deeper engagement on issues like democratic reforms and strengthening rule of law will be crucial.

4. (U) Management Objectives

(U) Management Objective 4.1: The Embassy makes significant progress in addressing inadequate wages and benefits for LE Staff, enabling us to better recruit and retain qualified personnel.

(U) Justification: Our top management and security/counter-intelligence issue remains the growing challenge of recruiting and retaining LE Staff because of inadequate wages.

(U) Since 2010, Vilnius' LE Staff have seen a significant decline in their standard of living. The majority of Vilnius' LE Staff seek financial support from family or find additional work outside the Embassy; currently more than 40 percent of LE Staff have second jobs in order to make ends meet. In 2018, Vilnius was authorized a 5 percent wage increase for grades FSN-1 through FSN-7 and a 14 percent increase for grades FSN-8 through FSN-12. This was the first increase since 2010. However, in January 2019, the Lithuanian Government instituted higher local social security contributions and personal income tax for employees. Per the new law, Post implemented a 29% LE staff wage increase; however, due to increased personal income taxes, employees ended up with the same or even lower salaries.

(U) In 2019, HR/OE, in coordination with the Bureau, moved Vilnius from the 70th to the 80th percentile, which led to another 2.7 percent salary increase for LE Staff in August 2019. In February 2020, in response to Post and Bureau requests, HR/OE completed an off-cycle review which resulted in a 4.4 percent increase across all grades.

(U) While these increases have helped improve morale, the core issue (of inadequate wages in comparison with the local labor market) has not been resolved. Post lost 5.9 percent of its LE Staff in 2019. Until salary levels are based on the unique labor market conditions specific to the city of Vilnius, we expect to continue to lose staff. Post will ask the Bureau and HR/OE to consider another survey in 2020, utilizing data from companies exclusively located in Vilnius. In 2019, Post requested in the Local Compensation Questionnaire (LCQ) that Vilnius move from the 80th to 85th percentile.

(U) In addition to the wage issue, LE Staff continue to express concerns about the current health care program, which does not cover family members (note: Post currently uses a reimbursement system). Vilnius is on HR/OE's priority list to switch to the new Global Medical Coverage in 2020, which extends better benefits to family members.

(U) Management Objective 4.2: The Embassy addresses critical life, safety, and security issues, and makes practical improvements to facilities, helping to provide a safe, secure, and effective platform to conduct diplomacy.

(U) Justification: Office space, both in non-CAA and CAA, continues to be a challenge due to the age and construction of our buildings and DS setback requirements. The space issue is particularly acute as we are seeking to add staff essential for implementing Mission goals. In addition to our own space needs, Post is supporting Embassy Minsk by providing both non-CAA and CAA office space when requested. Post has reached out to OBO Area Management and their design experts for assistance in addressing our space planning needs and to provide direction in an overall assessment of current space and projected growth.

(U) An OBO-managed multi-year embassy renovation project to correct many building deficiencies was completed in 2017. However, three projects still need to be completed that were not included in the initial OBO project:

- (U) Our computer server room located in the Chancery is too small for current equipment demands and needs to be relocated to ensure safe and stable unclassified communications (the project cost is estimated at \$1,000,000). A former IMS received a serious electrical shock in 2014 in this server room due to insufficient space to maneuver around the server racks. A February 2020 OIG inspection confirmed the need to move the server room as soon as possible. Post has contacted IRM's Foreign Operations Liaison Office to OBO and OBO Area Management regarding equipment space requirements.
- (U) The ventilation of our Consular Section of the Chancery was unintentionally disrupted by an early phase of the OBO renovation project that expanded the building. Post recently awarded a contract to a local contractor for the project, which will be funded by \$263,000 from OBO. The restoration of the ventilation system should be completed in spring 2020.
- (U) During the final stages of the OBO renovation project, the Public Affairs Building was not connected to our main generator. This has resulted in the Public Affairs Building not having back up electrical service, instead relying on battery power for emergency services. Post has reviewed the current situation with the OBO Facility Management Power Support team and the International Maintenance Assistance Program (IMAP) teams. A design direction has been set, a scope of work to connect the building to the compound's generator is underway, and a request for project funding has been initiated through the GMMS Facilities Work Plan process.

(U) A planned city park improvement project also has raised concerns regarding the integrity of a portion of the Embassy compound's west perimeter wall. The city would like to restore portions of the wall facing the park to an older, historic state, but this may negatively impact the wall's structural integrity and Post security. The project is expected to be undertaken in

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spring 2020. The city's tight timeline for the reconstruction project is still of a concern, as Post seeks recommended actions and approvals from OBO and DS offices in Washington.

(U) Recently, the DCM's residence, a leased property maintained primarily by the landlord, experienced a small fire caused by an old lighting fixture. The landlord completed restoration repairs only after extensive engagement by Post. The residence also has limitations in its representational spaces due to its split-level design and GSO is currently searching for a suitable replacement residence.

(U) Management Objective 4.3: The Embassy adds essential staff in order to respond to the increased operational requirements of a new geopolitical environment, thus advancing our ability to achieve Mission goals.

(U) Justification: Post needs more program staff to conduct increased outreach and support for Lithuania's efforts to enhance cyber capabilities and combat disinformation, and also requires more ICASS staff to support Post operations as well as a significant increase in USDH staffing since 2009, particularly in Post's DOD elements. At the same time, Post expects significant LE Staff retirement within the next 10 years.

(U) In 2009, when Embassy Vilnius had 39 USDH positions, Post eliminated 11 ICASS positions, approximately 10% of the LE Staff, through a reduction in force. In 2019, Post supported 52 U.S. direct hire (USDH) positions, a 33 percent increase over the past decade, and Post has rehired only eight ICASS positions. In addition, Post provides full and/or partial ICASS support to employees from DSCA, EUCOM, DIA, SOCEUR, ARMY-CINCUSAEUR, and AIR-FORCE (NFIU and FPD), and DOJ-FBI-LEGATT representatives from Embassy Riga. Embassy Minsk USDHs are expected to double from 10 to 20 by the summer of 2020. After conducting an in-depth analysis of all of Post's operations in 2018, M/SS determined that our existing ICASS staffing plan needs to grow in order to accomplish our ICS goals. Also, the Customer to Management (CM) Ratio for Mission Lithuania is 21.2. The average CM Ratio for similarly sized single-post missions is lower (18.8), indicating that our service providers have more customers than average. While there may be other relevant factors, the CM Ratio indicates that our management platform is not able to support customers effectively.

(U) In view of these additional requirements for both Program and ICASS staff, Post is requesting a total of four positions – two USDH positions and two LE Staff positions. These positions will allow us to adequately respond to the dramatic increase in workload and overall ICASS service demands that the Embassy has experienced over the past several years. Without these new positions we will struggle to achieve our Mission goals and objectives. The four positions requested are the following:

- Information Officer, Public Affairs Section: Countering disinformation and malign influence is a national security priority and a Mission objective. Public Affairs has the lead on Post's countering disinformation/malign influence efforts and advocacy for greater global recognition of Lithuania's expertise in this area. The two-officer Public

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Affairs section is operating at maximum capacity in order to dedicate sufficient time and resources to achieving this critical objective while keeping up with administrative, budgetary, and reporting demands, as well as projects and programs to achieve Post's other goals and objectives. Adding an Information Officer position would ensure Embassy Vilnius has adequate human resources to engage across government, media, civil society, military and academia on addressing this global threat.

- LE Staff Assistant, Political/Economic Section: Our expanded goals in the cyber sphere underpin our request for an additional local staff position in the Political/Economic Section. This position also would support our increased focus on protecting critical infrastructure, combating corruption, and protecting the financial sector – all areas vulnerable to Russian and Chinese Communist Party malign influence.
- Information Management Specialist, IRM: This position is required to adequately support the existing Mission footprint of 52 USDHs, as well the increasing numbers of Embassy Minsk TDY staff. As Embassy Minsk's demand for secure communication capability using our facilities intensifies, Post must have sufficient permanent staff on hand to address customer needs.
- LE Staff Electrical Technician, Management Section: In early 2019 the Embassy finalized the purchase of seven apartments near the Embassy. These units have had recurring issues related to design or construction deficiencies, including with their electrical, plumbing and heating/cooling systems. Post needs additional facilities staffing in order to provide necessary maintenance and repair for these properties. The most pressing need is for a LE Staff Electrical Technician, since we also have significant issues with our electrical system on the Embassy compound.